

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/888,046
Reply to Office Action dated September 23, 2004

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the paragraph on page 1 beginning at line 15 as follows:

In the past, this problem even existed within hospitals where individual patients' records were kept by the various departments in the hospitals. With the introduction of database management systems and the move to computer networking solutions, this distributed information problem within hospitals has been reduced significantly. The use of computer networks has allowed patient records to be stored in a common ~~database~~ databases and accessed and updated from workstations throughout the ~~hospital~~ hospitals.

Please amend the paragraph on page 2 beginning at line 17 as follows:

Preferably, during the selecting at least one image annotation, audio and/or text file related to the at least one image file is included in the data message. During the determining, ~~preferably~~ different categories of exchange rights are examined to locate the category the ~~recipient~~ to which the recipient has been assigned. If the recipient has not been assigned to a category, the recipient is assigned default exchange rights. In the preferred embodiment, the exchange rights determine whether the recipient is permitted to browse the at least one image file and related files, browse and archive the at least one image file and related files, browse and forward the at least one image and related files, or browse, archive and forward the at least one image and related files.

Please amend the paragraph on page 8 beginning at line 25 and ending on page 9 at line 6 as follows:

When the e-mail message arrives at the destination, the e-mail message is received by the mail server 26 of the recipient PACs 14 and is delivered to the mailbox of the recipient. When the recipient retrieves the e-mail message, the data message is retrieved from the mail server (see step 88 in Figure 4). Once retrieved, the data message is deconstructed firstly by MIME decoding and decrypting the data message (step 90). Afterwards, the data message is debundled (step 92) and all clear text files in the exam structure are decrypted (step 94). The exchange

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rights are then extracted from the exam structure starting with the browsing rights (step 96), then the archiving rights (step 98) and then the forwarding rights (step 100). The exam record image and related files are then recovered from the exam structure (step 102) and the exam record image and related files together with the exchange rights are cached (step 104). An acknowledgment is returned to the sender PACs 12 to verify receipt of the data message (step 106).